

MASSACHUSETTS FISHING & HUNTING



For more information on sporting laws and regulations, please refer to the 2021 *Massachusetts Guide* online at www.mass.gov/masswildlife or pick up a copy at sporting license vendor locations across the state.



FISHING SEASONS AND CREEL LIMITS

SPECIES	OPEN SEASON (ALL DATES INCLUSIVE)	DAILY CREEL LIMIT	MINIMUM LENGTH ¹
Trout ²			
Lakes, ponds, major rivers ^{3, 5, 6}	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	3	—
Housatonic River ⁴	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	1	20"
All other rivers and brooks	Apr. 1 – Sept. 10 Sept. 11 – Mar. 31, 2022	8 3	—
Lake Trout			
Wachusett Reservoir ⁶	(see note 6)	3	—
Quabbin ⁶	(see note 6)	2	18"
Landlocked Salmon ⁶	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	2	15"
American Shad ⁷ (Connecticut and Merrimack rivers only, including their tributaries.)	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	3	—
Chain Pickerel	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	5	15"
Black Bass (Largemouth and Smallmouth, singly or combined):	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	5	12"
Northern Pike	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	1	28"
Tiger Muskellunge	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	1	28"
Walleye	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	5	14"
Smelt ⁸	Jan. 1 – Feb. 28 May 16 – Dec. 31	—	—
All Other Freshwater Species ⁹	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	—	—
Striped Bass and Herring: For season, size, and possession limits call the Division of Marine Fisheries at (617) 626-1520, or visit mass.gov/marinefisheries .			
Possession of: Sturgeon (all species), American Brook Lamprey, Atlantic (sea-run) Salmon, Bridle Shiner, Burbot, Eastern Silvery Minnow, Lake Chub, Longnose Sucker, and Northern Redbelly Dace is illegal! If caught, release immediately. This means remove hook or cut line and return fish to water immediately — do not pose for photographs, place on a stringer, hold in a net, or delay in any way the immediate return and release of these rare fish to the water!			

1 **Minimum length** is measured as the straight line (not curved over the body) from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. The tips of any forked tail may be squeezed together for the final measurement.

2 **Trout** applies to Brook, Brown, Rainbow, and Tiger Trout (a cross between a female Brown and a male Brook Trout). From Apr. 1 to Sept. 10, no more than 8 trout (as defined) may be taken daily, and only 3 of those trout may be from lakes, ponds, or major rivers. From Sept. 11 to Mar. 31, no more than 3 trout (as defined) may be taken daily.

3 **Major Rivers:** Childs, Coonamessett, Deerfield, Farmington, Green (Colrain), Green (Great Barrington), Ipswich, Jones, Mashpee, Millers, Nissitissit, North (Colrain), North (West Branch), Parker, Quaboag, Quinapoxet, Quinebaug, Seven Mile, Santuit, Scorton Creek, Shawsheen, Squannacook, Stillwater (Sterling, Princeton), Swift (East Branch), Swift (Winsor Dam to Ware River, except as posted), Tully (East and West Branches), Ware, Ware (East Branch), Westfield (all branches).

4 **Mainstem Housatonic only**, from the confluence of the East and West Branches to the MA-CT line,

exclusive of the catch-and-release areas where no trout may be kept.

5 **Special Brown Trout water:** South Pond (Quacumquasit), Brookfield. Total daily creel is 3 trout but only 1 may be a Brown Trout and it must be at least 15".

6 **Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs:** Opening and closing dates are set by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The Quabbin Reservoir Fishing Season generally opens on the third Saturday of April and runs through the third Saturday in October, but these dates may be adjusted due to weather and other factors. Quabbin Reservoir and its tributary streams within the Quabbin Reservation are closed to all fishing except during the open season as set by DCR. The Quabbin Fishing Guide is available at: mass.gov/dcr/quabbinfish or by calling (413) 323-7221. The Wachusett/Sudbury/West Waushacum fishing season normally opens the first Saturday in April and closes November 30, but the DCR/DWSP may alter those dates depending on ice conditions. At Wachusett Reservoir, shoreline fishing only is allowed from Gate 6 on Route 70 to Gate 36 on

Route 110. A Wachusett and Sudbury Reservoir Fishing Guide is available at: mass.gov/dcr/wachusettfish or by calling (508) 792-7806.

7 **American Shad** are Catch-and-Release ONLY on all waters except the Connecticut and Merrimack rivers, including their tributaries.

8 **Smelt** may be taken by hook and line only.

9 Excluding the state- and federally-listed species listed after the "Possession of:" heading in the bottom row of the table shown above.

FREE FISHING WEEKEND

June 5–6, 2021
No freshwater license needed!

HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS

NO HUNTING ON SUNDAY

		OPEN SEASON (ALL DATES INCLUSIVE)	DAILY BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT	ANNUAL LIMIT
DEER					
Deer (Big Game)	Youth Deer Hunt Day	Oct. 2	See full regulations for more information.	1 antlered deer OR 1 antlerless deer in Zone specified in permit during season	
	Paralegic Hunt	Oct. 28 – Oct. 30	See full regulations for more information.	2 antlered deer + antlerless deer by permit	
	Shotgun	Nov. 29 – Dec. 11			
	Archery	Zones 1–9: Oct. 18 – Nov. 27			
	Primitive Firearms	Zones 10–14: Oct. 4 – Nov. 27 Dec. 13 – Dec. 31			
BLACK BEAR					
Black Bear (Big Game)	Zones 1–14	Sept. 7 – Sept. 25 Nov. 1 – Nov. 20 Nov. 29 – Dec. 11	See full regulations for more information.	1	
UPLAND GAME BIRDS*					
Crow	Zones 1–14	Jan. 1 – Apr. 10 July 1 – Apr. 9, 2022 (M, F, Sat only)	—	—	—
Pheasant	Youth Hunt	Sept. 4, 11, 18, 25, Oct 2, 9	2	4	6
	Zones 1–14	Oct. 16 – Nov. 27			
Quail	Zones 11–14	Oct. 16 – Nov. 27	4	8	20
Ruffed Grouse	Zones 1–14	Oct. 16 – Nov. 27	3	6	15
Wild Turkey (Big Game)	Youth Hunt: Zones 1–13	April 24 (special restrictions apply**)	See full regulations for more information.		
	Fall: Zones 1–9	Oct. 18 – Nov. 27			
	Fall: Zones 10–13	Oct. 4 – Nov. 27			
	Spring: Zones 1–13	April 26 – May 22			

* Upland game bird hunting is closed during shotgun deer season. Migratory game birds (includes waterfowl, woodcock, snipe, rails): Seasons and bag limits set annually. For Migratory Game Bird Regulations visit mass.gov/migratory-game-bird.

** Must have completed the Youth Turkey Hunt program.

RABBIT, HARE & SQUIRREL					
Cottontail Rabbit	Zones 1–12	Jan 1. – Feb. 27; Oct. 16 – Feb. 28, 2022	5	10	—
	Zones 13 and 14	Jan 1. – Feb. 27; Nov. 15 – Feb. 28, 2022	5	10	—
Snowshoe Hare	Zones 1–4	Jan. 1 – Feb. 27; Oct. 16 – Feb. 28, 2022	2	4	—
	Zones 5–12	Jan. 1 – Feb. 5; Oct. 16 – Feb. 5, 2022	2	4	—
	Zones 13 and 14	Jan. 1 – Feb. 5; Nov. 15 – Feb. 5, 2022	2	4	—
Gray Squirrel	Zones 1–9	Sept. 13 – Jan. 1, 2022	5	10	—
	Zones 10–14	Oct. 16 – Jan. 1, 2022	5	10	—

Rabbit, hare, and squirrel hunting are closed during shotgun deer season.

FURBEARERS					
Bobcat	Zones 1–8	Jan. 1 – Mar. 8; Dec. 20 – Mar. 8, 2022	—	—	—
Coyote	Zones 1–14	Jan. 1 – Mar. 8; Oct. 16 – Mar. 8, 2022	—	—	—
Fox (red or gray)	Zones 1–14	Jan. 1 – Feb. 27; Nov. 1 – Feb. 28, 2022	—	—	—
Opossum	Zones 1–14	Jan. 1 – Jan. 30; Oct. 1 – Jan. 31, 2022	—	—	—
Raccoon	Zones 1–14	Jan. 1 – Jan. 30; Oct. 1 – Jan. 31, 2022	3	See full regulations for more information.	—

All furbearer hunting seasons are closed during shotgun deer season except for coyotes.

Special restrictions apply. The following species may be taken year-round (except during shotgun deer season) by licensed hunters with no daily or seasonal bag limit: English sparrow, flying squirrel, red squirrel, chipmunk, porcupine, skunk, starling, weasel, woodchuck.

FURBEARER TRAPPING

		OPEN SEASON (ALL DATES INCLUSIVE)
Beaver ¹	Jan. 1 – April 15, 2021; Nov. 1, 2021 – April 15, 2022	
Bobcat ^{1,2} , Coyote ¹ , Fox ¹ , Weasel	Nov. 1 – Nov. 30, 2021	
Fisher ¹	Nov. 1 – Nov. 22, 2021	
Mink ¹ , River Otter ¹	Nov. 1 – Dec. 15, 2021	
Muskrat, Opossum, Raccoon, Skunk	Jan. 1 – Feb. 28, 2021; Nov. 1, 2021 – Feb. 28, 2022	

1 – Pelt checking/reporting required; see below.

2 – Bobcats may only be trapped or salvaged in Wildlife Management Zones 1–8.



TO REPORT VIOLATIONS
(800) 632-8075

www.mass.gov/ole